

What is claimed is:

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1. A latch assembly for releasably securing a first member in a closed position relative to a second member, one of said first member and said second member having a keeper in a fixed positional relationship therewith, the latch assembly comprising:

5 a housing having a hook-like member;

a pawl pivotally attached to the housing and being movable between a closed or engaged configuration and an open or disengaged configuration, the pawl being provided with a torsion spring member that biases the pawl toward the open or disengaged configuration;

a solenoid supported by the housing; and

10 a locking member actuated by said solenoid, the locking member being movable between extended and retracted positions,

wherein when the pawl impacts the keeper during closing of the first and second members together, the pawl is moved to the closed configuration, a lug projecting from the pawl being engaged by the locking member to retain the pawl in the closed configuration, and

15 wherein retracting the locking member by energizing the solenoid, allows the pawl to rotate under spring bias to the open configuration to thereby allow the latch to be disengaged from the keeper.

2. The latch assembly of claim 1, wherein said pawl member is arranged parallel with said housing.

20 3. The latch assembly of claim 1, wherein said pawl member is arranged perpendicular with said housing.

4. A latch comprising:

a housing having a hook-like structure;

25 a catch bar supported by said housing for translational and pivotal movement, said catch bar being movable between locked and unlocked positions;

a pawl pivotally supported by said housing proximate said hook-like structure, said pawl being movable between a closed and an open position, said pawl being biased toward said open position, said pawl having a bottom lug;

catch bar biasing means for biasing said catch bar toward engagement with said bottom lug; and

a handle pivotally attached to said housing, said handle having an actuating arm which is engageable with said catch bar when said catch bar is in said unlocked position.

5. A latch assembly comprising:

a housing having at least a pair of hook-shaped structures;

a catch beam supported by said housing for translational movement, said catch beam being movable between locked and unlocked positions;

at least a pair of pawls pivotally supported by said housing wherein each of said pawls being proximate a corresponding hook-shaped structure of said hook-shaped structures, each of said pawls being movable between a closed and an open position, each of said pawls being biased toward said open position, each of said pawls having a bottom lug;

a catch beam biasing means for biasing said catch beam toward engagement with said bottom lug; and

a solenoid assembly being in communication with said catch beam and said catch beam biasing means wherein activation of said solenoid assembly causing linear translational movement of said catch beam from a locked position to an unlocked position.

6. A latch assembly comprising:

a housing having at least one pair of hook-shaped structures;

at least one pair of pawls pivotally supported by said housing wherein each of said pawls is positioned proximate a respective one of said hook-shaped structures, each of said at least one pair of pawls being movable between a closed position and an open position, each of said at least one pair of pawls being biased toward said open position;

a catch beam supported by said housing for movement between locked and unlocked positions, said catch beam being engageable with said at least one pair of pawls to thereby essentially maintain each of said at least one pair of pawls in said closed position when said at least one pair of pawls are each in said closed position and said catch beam is in said locked position; and

a solenoid assembly operating to move said catch beam to said unlocked position when said solenoid is energized.

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